

NEW YORK TIMES

JUL 22 1964

*Cuba*  
*ORG 1: OAS*

*PERS: Eder, Richard*

*POL 2-01.1 Cuba/US*

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## Second Castro Overture

The foreign ministers of the American nations in the Organization of American States are meeting in Washington in a crucial session to decide whether to impose diplomatic and economic sanctions against Communist Cuba. Whatever action emerges, Cuba, already excluded from the proceedings in the O.A.S., is now more isolated in this hemisphere than ever. It stands morally condemned as an outlaw nation and not one voice is being raised in its defense. What is more, the Communist regime has led to an economic breakdown which neither Soviet bloc support of some \$2.5 million a day nor trade with other countries can repair.

It is in this situation that the two Castro brothers are issuing increasingly urgent appeals for negotiations, especially with the United States.

Following Fidel Castro's overture in a long interview with this newspaper's Havana correspondent, Richard Eder, the Premier's younger and even more Communistic brother, Armed Forces Minister Raul Castro, has gone further. He declares that Cuba is ready to meet the United States "anywhere, anytime, to discuss whatever may be necessary" to iron out problems between the two nations. He drops all the original conditions for such negotiations set by Premier Castro.

In urging talks without any "prior conditions," the Castro brothers would presumably expect the United States to drop its own conditions, a step for which Washington is not yet ready. As President Johnson has said, deeds count more than words, and Castro-inspired terrorism continues in Venezuela.

The new appeal for negotiations can be taken not only as a stratagem to influence the O.A.S. meeting but also as a cry of distress. It should be carefully examined for whatever possibilities of settlement it may offer.